

# McGruff House Code and Regulations

§ 9.1-159. Creation of **McGruff House** Program; duties of Department.

The symbol of " McGruff" with the phrase "**McGruff House**" shall be the symbol used to designate a house in the Commonwealth where a child who is abused, neglected or otherwise emotionally or physically in danger may seek refuge and assistance.

The Department shall adopt a standard symbol to be used throughout the Commonwealth which is the same as or substantially similar to the **McGruff House** symbol in use in other states. The Department shall establish by regulation appropriate procedures governing (i) qualifications and criteria for designation as a **McGruff House** and participants' duties and responsibilities, including the reporting of incidents to the local law-enforcement agency and department of social services' child-protective services program, (ii) programs to publicize the **McGruff House** Program, (iii) dissemination of the **McGruff House** symbol to day-care centers, schools, and law-enforcement agencies, (iv) designation and registration of **McGruff Houses** with, and monitoring and periodic review of such houses by, local law-enforcement agencies, and (v) coordination of the program with the child-protective services component of the local department of social services.

Nothing in this section shall prohibit the use of a symbol other than " McGruff" by a locality which currently has some other safe house program in existence and operation.

(1994, cc. 60, 868, § 9-173.17; 2001, c. 844.)

§ 9.1-160. Designation of **McGruff House**; application; penalty.

All persons displaying the **McGruff House** symbol so that it is visible from the outside of their house shall first apply for designation as a **McGruff House** with a local law-enforcement agency. Upon receipt of an application for designation, the local law-enforcement agency shall conduct a background check of the applicant in accordance with Chapter 23 (§ 19.2-387 et seq.) of Title 19.2 and Department regulations at no charge to the applicant. Any background checks of applicants for this program conducted by the Department of Social Services through the Child Abuse Registry shall be done at no charge. Upon finding that the applicant meets the criteria established by the Department for maintaining a **McGruff House** and receipt of a signed statement by the applicant agreeing to the terms and conditions of the **McGruff House** Program, the law-enforcement agency shall provide the applicant with the **McGruff House** symbol.

The **McGruff House** symbol shall remain the property of the local law-enforcement agency. Upon a determination by the issuing law-enforcement agency that a house no longer meets the established criteria for a **McGruff House**, the symbol shall promptly be returned to the issuing law-enforcement agency.

Failure to return the symbol promptly after receipt of a written request to do so, which shall state the reason for the request, shall be subject to a civil penalty of up to \$100. Persons not designated

pursuant to this section to display the **McGruff House** symbol shall be subject to a civil penalty of up to \$100.

(1994, cc. 60, 868, § 9-173.18; 2001, c. 844.)

CHAPTER 140  
MCGRUFF HOUSE PROGRAM REGULATIONS

Part I  
Description

**6VAC20-140-10. McGruff House description.**

A. A McGruff House is a home where a child in immediate emotional or physical danger or who is in immediate fear of abuse or neglect may seek temporary refuge for assistance.

B. The symbol of McGruff with the phrase "McGruff House" shall be the only symbol or logo authorized to designate a home participating in the McGruff House Program on or after July 1, 1989. Similar programs existing prior to July 1, 1989, such as Block Parents or Helping Hands, and others, are authorized to continue using their existing program symbols and program guidelines.

C. McGruff and McGruff House are copyright protected symbols used by the National Crime Prevention Coalition in its National "Take A Bite Out Of Crime" campaign. The symbol of McGruff must be used in accordance with guidelines developed by the National Crime Prevention Coalition.

Statutory Authority

§§[9.1-159](#) and [9.1-160](#) of the Code of Virginia.

Historical Notes

Derived from VR240-04-1 §1.1, eff. July 1, 1990.

Editor's Note

Pursuant to the revision authority of the Virginia Code Commission, the statutory authority was updated in February 2003.

Part II  
Requirements

---

**6VAC20-140-20. Sponsorship.**

A. Participation in the McGruff House Program must be initiated by a local law-enforcement agency. A local law-enforcement agency may participate in the McGruff House Program by having the chief executive of the law-enforcement agency apply in writing on the agency's stationary.

The letter of intent to participate in the McGruff House Program must be sent to the Director of the Department of Criminal Justice Services.

B. Only one law-enforcement agency within a city, county or town jurisdiction may sponsor the McGruff House Program for that locality. The decision as to which law-enforcement agency will sponsor the McGruff House Program is at the option of the locality wishing to participate.

C. Upon written notification from a qualified local law-enforcement agency to participate in the McGruff House Program, the Department of Criminal Justice Services shall provide the requesting law-enforcement agency a copy of the McGruff House Regulations, a McGruff House Starter Kit and a McGruff House Participation Agreement form.

D. Qualified law-enforcement agencies that agree to participate in the McGruff House Program by signing the McGruff House Participation Agreement must develop internal policy guidelines. Agency internal guidelines, in accordance with these regulations, shall at a minimum prescribe the following procedures:

1. Recruitment;
2. Participant background investigation;
3. Training; and
4. Monitoring and record keeping.

E. These requirements are the minimum necessary for a law-enforcement agency to sponsor a McGruff House Program. A sponsoring law-enforcement agency may exceed these minimum requirements at its option.

Statutory Authority

§§[9.1-159](#) and [9.1-160](#) of the Code of Virginia.

Historical Notes

Derived from VR240-04-1 §2.1, eff. July 1, 1990.

**6VAC20-140-30. Recruitment.**

A. Participation in the McGruff House Program is available to residents within a locality where a law-enforcement agency has agreed to participate in the McGruff House Program.

B. The law-enforcement agency may recruit participants through schools, day care programs, crime prevention programs, community groups or by other methods it deems necessary.

C. Individuals interested in participating in the McGruff House Program must apply directly with the law-enforcement agency sponsoring the McGruff House Program in the locality where they reside.

D. All persons 18 years or older residing in a home wishing to be designated a McGruff House must be listed on a McGruff House Participant's Application form. This form authorizes background investigations for all persons 18 years or older residing in the home wishing to participate.

E. Approved households may participate in the McGruff House Program for two years. Reapplication is required within two years of the prior approval date. Participating law-enforcement agencies will review and update background information of all reapplications.

F. The McGruff House Participation application form used by the law-enforcement agency must at a minimum require the following information.

1. Full names of all persons 18 years or older residing in the applying residence.
2. Birth dates of all persons 18 years or older residing in the applying residence.
3. Social security number or driver's license number of all persons 18 years or older residing in the applying residence.
4. Former home addresses of all persons 18 years or older residing in the applying residence for the previous five years.
5. Address of the applying home.
6. Description of any animals kept at the applying residence.
7. Description of any special conditions which may affect the safety of children who may come into contact with the applying residence.

G. Only those homes where all persons 18 years or older residing at the applying residence have passed the law-enforcement background investigation and have received authorization from the law-enforcement agency may participate in the McGruff House Program.

Statutory Authority

§§[9.1-159](#) and [9.1-160](#) of the Code of Virginia.

Historical Notes

Derived from VR240-04-1 §2.2, eff. July 1, 1990.

**6VAC20-140-40. Background investigation.**

A. The sponsoring law-enforcement agency shall conduct a background investigation of all persons 18 years or older residing in the applying residence using the information provided on the McGruff House Participant's application.

B. The background investigation and the information obtained from the background investigation shall be done in compliance with §[19.2-389](#) of the Code of Virginia, dissemination of criminal history record information.

C. The background investigation of the McGruff House applicants at a minimum will include the following:

1. Local, state and federal criminal history check of all applicants.
2. Local and state check of child/domestic abuse complaints involving the applying residence or any of the applicants.
3. Local, state and federal check of outstanding arrest warrants for all applicants.
4. An on site neighborhood check of no less than three households in the immediate neighborhood.

D. Upon completing the background investigation, the law-enforcement agency must refuse participation in the McGruff House Program to any applying residence where any of the residents have been convicted of a felony, convicted of a narcotic drug law offense, or convicted of any domestic or child abuse related charges, or convicted of any charge involving an offense committed against a juvenile. The law-enforcement agency may also, at its own discretion, refuse participation in the McGruff House Program to any individual or household it deems not suited for participation, based upon information gathered from the background investigation. All decisions regarding participation in the program shall be the responsibility of the participating law-enforcement agency, in accordance with these regulations.

E. Records of all applicants shall be maintained by the law-enforcement agency. Applicants shall be notified directly by the law-enforcement agency whether they have been accepted or denied within a reasonable period after the background investigation has been conducted. The law-enforcement agency may notify an organized community group, McGruff House Program, Neighborhood Watch, or other similar organizations of authorized McGruff House Program participants. Information pertaining to rejected applicants shall be kept confidential by the law-enforcement agency, unless the law-enforcement agency finds information of a nature which would require it to invoke its statutory law-enforcement obligations.

Statutory Authority

§§9-173.17 and 9-173.18 of the Code Virginia.

Historical Notes

§§9.1-159 and 9.1-160 of the Code of Virginia

**6VAC20-140-50. Training.**

A. Law-enforcement agencies participating in the McGruff House Program shall provide all participants a training session which addresses the following:

1. Review of emergency telephone numbers.
2. Review of emergency and suspicious situation reporting procedures.
3. Review of McGruff House regulations.
4. Review of basic child and community safety information.
5. Review of the procedures for the proper display and use of the McGruff House sign.

B. Participating law-enforcement agencies will advise all personnel of the purpose and regulations of the McGruff House Program and will develop appropriate policy to guide their personnel to implement and administer the McGruff House Program.

Statutory Authority

§§[9.1-159](#) and [9.1-160](#) of the Code of Virginia.

Historical Notes

Derived from VR240-04-1 §2.4, eff. July 1, 1990.

#### **6VAC20-140-60. Participant duties and responsibilities.**

A. McGruff House participants must display the McGruff House Program sign in a prominent location so that it can be easily seen from the most frequently traveled public area adjoining the property of the residence. The sign shall be displayed at all times. The McGruff House Program sign shall appear as follows:

[image](#)

For Participant duties and responsibilities, see Virginia Administrative Code print product.

- B. Participants must have a valid homeowner's or renter's liability insurance policy in effect.
- C. The participating residence must have a working telephone which can be used to make emergency or referral telephone calls.
- D. Participants will provide the following assistance to children who call upon them for aid.
1. Telephone appropriate authorities for help.
  2. Reassure and aid children who are frightened or lost.

3. Assist children who have medical emergencies by getting appropriate assistance.
4. Assist children who are immediately in fear of becoming victims of personal crimes or thefts, or who are in immediate fear of child abusers, gangs or bullies.
5. Immediately report to the law-enforcement agency details of all incidents where children request assistance.
6. Immediately report crimes and suspicious situations to law-enforcement officials.

E. McGruff House Program participants are not to do any of the following for children requesting assistance.

1. Personally provide first aid or administer medications, except in emergencies and then only if qualified.
2. Act as an escort service or provide transportation.
3. Enforce laws.
4. Provide babysitting or child care services.
5. Provide food or beverages.

F. The participating law-enforcement agency may at any time disqualify from participation any residence where any of its members engage in activity deemed by the law-enforcement agency to be detrimental to the objective of the McGruff House Program, or where any of the members are found guilty or any of the offenses noted in 6VAC20-140-40 D.

Statutory Authority

§§[9.1-159](#) and [9.1-160](#) of the Code of Virginia.

Historical Notes

Derived from VR240-04-1 §2.5, eff. July 1, 1990.

**6VAC20-140-70. Record keeping and monitoring.**

A. Participating law-enforcement agencies are required to maintain records of the participants and activities of the McGruff House Program.

B. Participating law-enforcement agencies will provide an annual calendar year report of the status of the McGruff House Program to the Department of Criminal Justice Services. The McGruff House Annual Report must be submitted by February 1 of each year. The annual report will include the following:

1. The number of homes participating in the program at the beginning and end of each calendar year.

2. The number of new McGruff House Participant applications.
3. The number of new McGruff House participants.
4. The number of McGruff House Participant applications denied and reason for denial.
5. The number of McGruff House Participant reapplications.
6. The number of homes which voluntarily discontinue participation in the McGruff House Program.
7. The number of homes removed from participation in the McGruff House Program and reasons for removal.
8. The number of incidents accompanied by a brief description where McGruff Houses were used by children in need of assistance.

#### Statutory Authority

§§[9.1-159](#) and [9.1-160](#) of the Code of Virginia.

#### Historical Notes

Derived from VR240-04-1 §2.6, eff. July 1, 1990.

#### **6VAC20-140-80. McGruff House sign.**

A. The McGruff House sign issued by the National Crime Prevention Coalition is the only sign authorized for use in the McGruff House Program.

B. The McGruff House signs may be obtained by the participating law-enforcement agency from the Virginia Crime Prevention Center, Department of Criminal Justice Services, which has been designated to administer the McGruff House Program by the National Crime Prevention Coalition. The state McGruff Program Administrator may be contacted at:

Virginia Crime Prevention Center

Department of Criminal Justice Services

805 East Broad Street

Richmond Virginia

(804) 786-4000

C. The McGruff House signs are rented for \$1.00 per sign by the participating law-enforcement agency. One sign is rented for each participating McGruff House. The rented signs are issued unique serial numbers which are issued to the participating law-enforcement agency which rents



them. The law-enforcement agency will maintain a record of the serial numbers of signs issued to McGruff House participants.

D. A home which discontinues participation or is removed from participating in the McGruff House Program will return the McGruff House sign to the issuing law-enforcement agency within 15 business work days. Failure to return the McGruff House sign within 15 business days after receiving a certified letter, with return receipt required, may subject the sign holder to a civil penalty of up to \$100.

Statutory Authority

§§[9.1-159](#) and [9.1-160](#) of the Code of Virginia.

Historical Notes

Derived from VR240-04-1 §2.7, eff. July 1, 1990.

**6VAC20-140-90. Penalty for misuse.**

A. Subsequent to July 1, 1990, display of a McGruff House symbol by persons not designated pursuant to §§9-173.4 [Repealed.] and 9-173.5 [Repealed.](§§9-173.17 and 9-173.18) of the Code of Virginia and these regulations to participate in the program, shall be subject to a civil penalty of up to \$100.

Statutory Authority

§§[9.1-159](#) and [9.1-160](#) of the Code of Virginia.

Historical Notes

Derived from VR240-04-1 §3.1, eff. July 1, 1990.

**FORMS**

McGruff House Participation Agreement.

McGruff House Annual Report, eff. 1/23/90.